

Comment



# Hackney Post

## Final justice for Guantánamo?

The Government must avoid giving ammunition to Islamist propagandists by guaranteeing British ex-detainees get the same basic benefits as the rest of us

THE STORY of Guantánamo Bay is familiar for many of us, but the fate of the prison’s inmates after they leave and attempt to integrate into society is one we pay less attention to.

This should not be the case in a compassionate democracy, but the issue has become all the more pressing now US President Barack Obama has broken with the policies of his predecessor by pledging to close the camp within a year.

Mr Obama’s refusal to use the term “enemy combatant” should also restore some of the lost humanity of those held there.

This demonstrates the problems in our perception of those caught up in the “War on Terror” waged by George Bush.

In an exclusive interview with the *Hackney Post* (see pages 8 and 9), ex-Guantánamo detainee Tarek Dergoul has revealed the shameful treatment he received after eventually returning home to Hackney.

The 31-year-old says he was tortured during three years of imprisonment in Cuba but was then refused basic benefits after coming back to Britain.

Dergoul was released without charge and although he should have got the same care that anyone would hope for after a period of such suffering this was not the case.

Humiliated, he had to campaign for three years to secure simple income support and housing benefit.

This is the same length of time he was denied liberty on a barren beach 90 miles from America.

The British Government has been too content to leave its citizens in the extrajudicial custody of another nation - out of sight and out of mind.

Soon all European Union states must accept they have a responsibility to repatriate at least some of the 244 Guantánamo prisoners when they are eventually allowed to leave.

This will hopefully remove what has been an effective call to arms for Islamist propagandists.

Someone who served his community by caring for the elderly like Dergoul should not have faced so many obstacles or had to turn to a human rights charity to finally get the services he craved.

His daily struggle to communicate with family is down to the lack of connection he can feel with those who have not suffered as he has.

Salvation could lie with the charity Cageprisoners with whom he is currently working on a documentary featuring fresh interviews with every one of his fellow British inmates – all 13 of whom were eventually released from Guantánamo without charge.

As the driving force behind the project, perhaps Dergoul will finally be allowed to escape from the social and mental imprisonment caused by the horrors he claims to have experienced in Cuba.

## New era for rape conviction

The criminal justice system is seriously failing women, and better understanding of rape and its victims is urgently needed

INVESTIGATION of rape should be made a real priority by police and prosecutors. Two high-profile cases this week show that this may not yet be the case (see pages 1 and 4). Specific training should be introduced which is aimed at front-line staff to change attitudes towards rape, and to improve initial responses to women reporting and early evidence collection. Priorities and targets for local forces on tackling sexual violence should also be introduced.

The Fawcett Society’s ‘Commission on Women and the Criminal Justice System’ examines the experiences of women within the criminal justice system including female victims of crime. Since the inception of the commission in 2003, there have been some important developments within the police such as the appointment of a “rape champion” within every force and the introduction of specialist rape

investigators. However, front-line staff continue to doubt the credibility of rape victims and society continues to judge the victim rather than the perpetrator. Rape conviction rates also vary dramatically between police force areas, which shows a lack of national leadership and inconsistency in approaches to the investigation of rape.

The statistics paint a picture of a criminal justice system which is seriously failing women. Only 6.5 per cent of rape cases which are reported to the police lead to a conviction in England and Wales in 2008 compared to 33 per cent in 1977. Rape continues to be a crime which is not treated with the professionalism or vigour devoted to other crimes. Men reported to the police for rape are frequently not investigated and their crimes do not appear in police records - even though some have previous records of violent of-

fences and sexual attacks on women.

Women who are victims of rape and sexual violence need to have confidence in the justice system to provide them with support, safety and justice. A high rape conviction rate is important because it may deter perpetrators and encourage victims to have confidence in the justice system. However, it is also important for victims to be provided with support such as rape crisis centres in every area throughout the UK and a Government-funded helpline.

The final report of Fawcett’s commission is due for release in May and will make a number of key recommendations aimed at creating a criminal justice system which is fair for women.

*Sharon Smees, Justice Policy Officer for The Fawcett Society, the UK’s leading campaign for equality between men and women.*

## Football for the masses, not classes

Sports outreach work needs to fulfil its stated purpose, and not just provide an opportunity for volunteers to stretch their legs

THERE WAS further humiliation for bankers and lawyers this week (see page 15) as the finest football assets owned by Deutsche Bank, UBS and Linklaters were outstripped by a team of Shoreditch teenagers.

Representative sides from the two international banks and the Magic Circle law firm were outclassed by a bunch of whiskery boys in a tournament designed to bring big businesses and underprivileged youngsters together.

But while the football stock of these white-collar workers took a tumble, the real loss in value was to the tournament itself – and to this type of outreach project.

Outreach work was first conceived as a way of offering free education to those from disadvantaged communities. Over

the years it has moved towards providing ways of bringing together the privileged and the underprivileged – whether through playing football or painting school walls.

This evolution away from education towards engagement is a good thing. The football starlets in this competition – all from the same Hackney council estate - would be unlikely to enjoy being taught by bankers and lawyers scarcely older than themselves and from vastly different backgrounds.

The problem is that the engagement, as was the case in this football tournament, often stops at sharing the same pitch. When not in action, the bankers and lawyers stood well apart from their teenage opponents. And when the Linklaters’ captain announced the

name of the tournament’s best player, he shouted over to the project coordinator for the boy’s name and then received catcalls for his pronunciation of Aaron.

This failed engagement has seemingly been picked up by both sides of this outreach equation. Turnout from City workers was below that of previous years. The winning team only confirmed it would take part at the last minute.

One Deutsche banker, who has played in the tournament for the past three years, admitted there was a problem, saying banks needed to think up other initiatives that facilitated better interaction.

He seemed to be a solitary voice, however. After all it is easier to turn up for an hour, have a kick-about and claim you are helping the community.

## Kanye West finds Religion

Hackney guidance for rapper

News, page 5



## Fashion student stabbed

Paralysed from the neck down after waking from coma

News, page 7

## Jailing Boy George

Police “key achievement” for year

News, page 4



## The new J.D. Salinger

Author writes in a rooftop train

Features, page 10

### CONTACT

www.hackneypost.co.uk  
twitter.com/hackneypost

### DISCLAIMER

*The opinions expressed in the Hackney Post are not necessarily those of the editors. Whilst every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this publication is correct and accurate at the time of going to print, the publisher cannot accept any liability for information which is later altered or incorrect. The Hackney Post as a publication adheres to the Press Complaints Commission’s Code of Conduct. Contact them for any information.*

### EDITOR

Patrick Loughran

### SPORT

Iain Withers  
Daniel Igra

### NEWS

Morwenna Coniam

Josie Ensor  
Katherine Faulkner  
Beth Mellor

### ARTS

Alison Battisby  
Katy Barnato

### FEATURES

Ben Hewitt  
Michael Haddon  
Oliver Shah

### ONLINE

Etan Smallman  
Laurence Cable  
Clare Dickinson

### BUSINESS

Matthew Robinson  
Nathan Bleaken

### PRODUCTION

Lara King  
Shona Ghosh  
Victoria Raimes